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Book J65





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JOHN, THE TRAITOR;

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THE FORCE OF ACCIDENT.

A PLAIN STORY.



BY ONE WHO HAS WHISTLED AT THE PLOUGH.

Hunc lubido maxima invaserat reipublicæ capiundæ; neque, id quibus modis adsequeretur, dum sibi regnum pararet, quidquam pensi habebat. Agitabatur magis, magisque indies animus ferox conscientia scelerum quæ utraque his artibus auxerat, quas supra memoravi.

Sallust Bel. Cat.

NEW YORK:

1843.
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ACCIDENT sometimes in a most amusing fashion, carries little men to some lofty, windy pinnacle of fortune, whence they survey the prospect with amiable complacency, and great airiness. It is well that accident does so uplift them; for it is certain that the force of their own reason never could, and their own merits never would. Being without weight of character, but light, vapid, and of a buoyant emptiness, the breeze gets hold of them, and carries them up to high places, where they stick. Let me not be deemed irreverent to

regard aught as in the light of Accident, but rather as resorting to common language, when by a strange concurrence of circumstances, things happen which men do not exactly understand, nay which are so much out of, and beyond the common order of events that they rather marvel. Such accidencies are rare; so much so, that they may be almost considered in the light of miracles. A Timothy Dexter will be an ensample to all time. He sent warming-pans to the West Indies, and Fortune only smiled at his ridiculous folly. The more atrociously Timothy rebelled against common sense, and the first principles of reason, which a child would not violate without compunction, the more goldenly was Timothy rewarded for his asinine endeavours. How such means, so employed, could work out such results would puzzle the head of the most astute philosopher whom the Almighty ever blessed with extraordinary endowments. But there are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. We say that such accidents are rare. The common course of things is plainly this: Wealth, place, honours, distinction, and the high places of the earth, these are the pomps won only by the nobleness of labour, by the vigour of the right arm, and toil which causes the sweat to start from every pore of the brow. He who starts

from the gates of youth, and has within him the true spark, and makes his aims lofty, and discards voluptuousness, when years find him still toiling, may attain the prize. We have looked through all history, and do not really know that we have pitched but upon two men whose good fortunes seem to have resulted almost entirely from chance: the one is the aforesaid Timothy; the other, a name which ought to be honest, viz. : JOHN.

It ought to be honest; but names are deceptive. More Johns than one have deserved a halter and been clasped in its affectionate embrace. The JOHN, we speak of, is at present elevated between Heaven and Earth, high as Olympus above his fellow-men; swaying the sceptre, which has been put into his hands, humanly speaking, by an extremely pure chance. No set of men ever designed to put it there; but they have paid the penalty of what they *did* design: to place him in a subordinate place, whence, reptile-like, he has crawled up. They deserve punishment because they ought to have been more circumspect, and to have considered the chance of that happening, which honest men would have deemed impossible in the nature of things; as much so as for the sun to stand still, for water to flow up hill, or the course of nature to go backward, viz. : for a gentle-

man to absolve himself from his word of promise, to violate his faith, and to betray his friends into the hands of enemies. This JOHN did, whom we will not attempt to compare with that conspicuous character in our revolutionary annals, Benedict Arnold. *He* fought some good battles for his country before he stamped his name with a traitor's undying infamy. That his motives were those of a paltry ambition is not so clear, since he was already in the path of honour and promotion, and it must have seemed extremely doubtful whether he could gain any thing in that light by the change. They say that he received ten thousand pounds from Sir Henry Clinton, as the price of his treason. Neither is this fact so clear: he was a wild, fantastic man, judging from the manner in which he used to dash through the battle; we think, crazy. But all this is neither here nor there. The balance of infamy is clearly on JOHN's side. Therefore, let us have no comparisons unless we can find better. What is more dreadful than all, is to see a betrayer, calm as a summer morning, sitting in a high place, tinkling his thirty pieces of silver. Where shall we seek for conduct, which ought to summon to the cheek of the guilty a more rich and gorgeous hue of shame!

Let us look at the story, which is then simply

this: The Convention, which met at Harrisburg, considering the diversity of feelings and interests represented, exhibited a spirit of compromise, and unanimity which was really noble. Wise men, distinguished men, formed the staple of that Convention. They did not go there to uphold their own men, dear and well-deserving as they might be, but to sacrifice all, except principle, on the altar of the common good. And they did so nobly. They allayed all jealousy, settled all differences, stilled the elements which might have boiled up into a fiery turmoil, and having wrought out the ends for which they came together, separated in admirable harmony and peace. Honour to the men whose names are on the list of that Convention; and it will be awarded to them while the annals of our country last. It is true they had not nominated the man whom affection and gratitude had long endeared to the hearts of his countrymen; yet, under every circumstance, could they have done better? All went home satisfied with the result, and it is certain that those who sent them were equally well satisfied. Only one man could not well moderate his disappointment; he shed tears that Henry Clay had not received the nomination. Ah! for a few of those tears, which must have been so bright and shining, to place them in bottles, or lacrymal vases! How would

they sparkle in the sunbeams, just as if they were not fictitious gems, and chemistry could not detect their hypocrisy! They remind us of the river Nile! The choice of the Convention fell on a glorious old soldier, scarred all over in his country's service; who had reaped few rewards, except the reverence which a pure character inspires, and a poverty which brought with it any thing but disgrace. For it shed a halo around him, brighter than all his civic honours, or the memory of well-fought battles. He was unattainted by avarice amid heaps of treasures, and let his penury endure through a golden harvest, which other men would have garnered for themselves. Yet he never was so poor as to be forgetful of hospitality, which he knew how to dispense with an unaffected grace. He had read the book of all history, and had pondered every glorious example to add weight and dignity to his own. Such virtue the poet Horace has loved to commemorate in one of his noblest odes:

Redditum Cyri solio Phraatem
 Dissidens plebi, numero beatorum
 Eximit virtus, populumque falsis
 Dedocet uti
 Vocibus; *regnum et diadema tutum*
Deferens uni propriamque laurum
Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto
 Spectat acervos.

Yet this good man who had acknowledged no

enemies since Tecumseh perished, and the battles of his country ceased, now found himself assailed by hosts, bitter as the malignity of party spirit could summon up. By their blind rancour they disgusted the good of every party. They ransacked their vocabulary of blackguardism, as copious as that of any language, for the most vile and unheard of epithets wherewith to stigmatize a man who was considered worthy of all praise, higher than all blame. They uttered lies black as hell, knowing them to be such, and ingrates as they were, attempted to blacken the page of their country's history, to dim her brightest annals, and from the paltriest motives to sully her fair fame. They threw mud and stones, but exerting themselves overmuch, they were destined to see all the weapons they had used recoiling to their own destruction. Such is the fate of all demagogues who love their country less, and themselves more! Oh! it were better to renounce all party, and forego the right of suffrage forever than stand before the world as a traducer of one's country, or dim one star in her escutcheon.

They have been pleased to denominate this the Log Cabin and Hard Cider Campaign, and to assert that to coon skins and stuffed animals, was to be attributed the great measure of its success. *That* democracy must be feeble indeed which is

put to flight by the grinning and savageness of such dead 'varmint.' I care not what name they give it, seeing it is natural for low characters to call names. That log cabins were erected in great numbers I grant you, and that they were duly furnished after a rustic sort, with coons of a good size, and other emblems. These, I take it, are nothing more than the significant types employed by imaginative people on all similar occasions of excitement or revolution. So hickory-trees as emblematic of the old soldier, iron-hearted, stout, and unyielding, were erected at every tavern, with noisy orgies and great consumption of liquor. But call it by what name you will, the campaign began, and it was one of the most memorable in all our annals. It was a crisis which brought every man to his post, which demanded and received an utter abandonment of all beside the main duty; a battle fought with determined vigor; the convulsive, agonized efforts of a whole people to throw off an incubus which weighed them down, and they deserved a better fate than to be cruelly robbed of all the fruits of their extreme toil by a base-born traitor. Look well at the odds with which they had to contend; the disadvantage; their inferiority in all, except a just cause, and an undaunted courage. The enemy held all the choice places and positions in the country,

to do with an indecent want of principle, turning all to base party purposes, and making the tide of corruption flow where any could be corrupted by money. They will have to answer before High Heaven for the crimes then committed, and for having used the money wrung out of the people to oppress the people. The day of retribution will come, though they may vaunt themselves in high places, and seem apparently to flourish like green bay-trees. Beside the strength of a party already in possession of all the outposts and entrenchments, preparing for the fight, and sharpening their teeth with ravenous avidity for the loaves and fishes, the petty spoils of petty office, consider that one word, DEMOCRACY, with all its great and towering pretensions, its vague delusion, the cabalistical charm and enchantment, which it always exercises over the ignorant mass. Only let that cry and watchword go forth upon the breeze, and it is carried from the sea shore to the mountains, and thence to the sea shore again. DEMOCRACY, the hollow rocks and woods rebound! Only raise that cry, and you will see a stir and commotion; hosts of men, swarming like agitated bees, a vast number clamouring with a strong brogue, and laying to their souls this flattering unction,—unmitigated liberty, and en-

tire equality, nay, a division of property. Their grey eyes roll with gloating lust upon the rich men's carriages; they have cut out, in ideal survey, an equitable share of their farms. Voluptuous are the imaginations, which come from a dreadful scantiness of potatoes, to riot on the tender beef of the land. Compute me how many burnished spades will weigh down the lighter suffrages of the sons of the soil! The leaders flatter the misguided views of such a rabble, and they rush onward, any whither, to the very devil, if one will but carry a flag before them inscribed Democracy. "All men are by nature free and equal." Oh! great champion of liberty, thou shouldst have said that all men ought to be. But could thy heart indite this without knowing that it indited a false matter, when the chains of unmitigated slavery were clanking in thy very ears, and the sound of the hammer, and the cry of the auctioneer came up shrill from the slave-market? When the ties of nature were rent asunder with a most bloody force, and men and women sold like cattle within the very sight of the Citadel of Freedom, and the waving of the star-spangled banner of America? This is one of the false cries of Democracy—and it has many others—it is full of deceit. There is no such thing as Democracy here in its true meaning, nor ever will be.

There never was a word so destined to keep a rabble on the hue and cry, and always on a false scent. They never reap the fulfilment of promises, and yet they run on, panting and out of breath in the race of delusion, while the basely selfish men who deceived them, are enriched by their unjustifiable frauds. No : there never was so much tyranny perpetrated under any other name : not, I am sure, under any dynasty of kings, or race of despots. A less stretch of prerogative than we have witnessed, brought the monarch Charles I. to the block, and we have been compelled, under our government, to submit to impositions great as the English submitted to before Magna Charta. Think of our old General pocketing bills, and removing deposits, swearing all the while, "by the Eternal," as the Eighth Henry swore by a more remarkable oath, and taking responsibilities with a refreshing coolness ; all wishes, prayers, and protests, except his own, being clearly nothing. Here was a beautiful exemplification of democracy. Non bene creditur *ripæ* ! (forgive the bad punning) yet the maxim of Virgil's sheep he was willing to adopt as his own. He waged war upon the Bank, because it was an evil engine, and might be directed to political ends ; yet the very secret of his anger was, that he was unable, by his *dictum*, to sway it to political ends. He took upon him, of

his free will, to set the currency in confusion, when he understood as much about banking, currency, or any kindred topic, as the back of his own hand. By his ill-judged distribution of the public funds, and his superadded counsel, he tempted the petted banks to extend themselves to the point of their dangerous explosion; stimulated, by such unwonted facilities, the avidity of men; and was the author of that unnatural expansion, which made wise men fools, honest men knaves, and the whole country, hitherto of unimpeachable honour, a disgusting spectacle of knavery to all the nations of the globe. This he did by virtue of Democracy, which I can compare, for its swift, indomitable, watchful tyranny, only to that *Fama* of the poet, whom he represents as winging her flight through all the cities of Libya; an evil swifter than any under the sun, and which acquired fresh velocity in its path; lifting its head proudly to the very skies, having innumerable vigilant eyes, and as many voluble tongues, keeping guard on high places, and terrifying even great cities:

Monstrum, horrendum, ingens.

It was against the multitudes swayed by such false watch-words, and the victim of such hopes, that the contest was to be waged. It was as easy to fight against Turks, rendered passionately brave by the sight of a voluptuous Paradise;

meadows decked all over with the most odorous flowers; waters of chrystal clearness; seclusions unrivalled, except in dreams, for their deliciousness of repose; and women of extatic beauty. But distress and starvation, and the want of bread will open men's eyes, and force them to discern the truth, through the thickest fogs of error. The people cried mightily for a change of men, and for a change of measures: "Take us," said they, "the Foxes, the little Foxes, which spoil the grapes." In the palace reposed their leader with cunning security. He merely told his minions not to trust to their own lungs, which were worn out, but to contract for a quantity of trumpets, which government would pay for, and blow Democracy through them from one end of the country to the other. This false security was one blessed element of hope in a just cause; another, the pressure of poverty and disgrace, which could not be rendered more grievous. When Peace reigned with a gentle sway over the land, and all the elements of strife were hushed; when the sunshine was never more genial, nor the dews and rains of heaven shed down with more sweet profusion on the earth, prosperity seemed to have taken her flight forever. The hum of industry, the sound of the hammer, the bustle of activity, in the great mart, were no longer heard. Grass grew where it was never

known to grow before, from the continued treading of men's feet. The white sails flapped lazily in the breeze, and the argosies which were wont to go forth on such wealthy errands, lay rotting at the wharves, unable to put out to sea. A dreadful palsy deadened all the body and limbs, which had been deprived of their circulation, and impoverished by the impudence of quacks. The country had no currency; it had been exhausted by exploits, experiments, and tinkerings of those who followed in the footsteps of the illustrious predecessor. So the people cried mightily for a change of measures. Now is it possible that the jejunest common sense could fail to apprehend *what* measures were referred to, or *what* change was intended? Was not the chiefest policy of the then Administration, about which the American people were most eager, that which related to money, money, money, the very blood of the country, which if it be stagnant, or depraved, or interrupted in its flow, the whole system loses its tone, and is brought down to a deplorable weakness? If then *they* had practiced to the detriment of the patient by any new experiment, it was well understood that their opponents, exhibiting the spirit which they then did, would restore the old treatment: if a former system had been torn down, that *they* desired to build it up; and so in whatever related to the

main dispute, for the doctrines of the Destructives, to substitute their opposites;—no bank—bank; no tariff—tariff. And here we have a chance to notice the truth and candescent purity of your self-styled Democracy. The crisis being come, they proclaim by the voice of a *Herald*, “trust them not; such and such are their principles; they make no secret of them; they desire a Bank; they desire silk stockings.” Yet when their demagogues have bawled themselves hoarse to no purpose, and find themselves floored by the force of these very principles (though *they say not*, but by coons of the wilderness) when the people would have their wishes acceded to, your democrats admire at it quite unfeignedly, and say, “they had *no* principles. Such was not the issue; they said nothing about a bank; they breathed not a whisper about *silk stockings*. The firmness of the Chief Magistrate will oppose their aristocratic pretensions.”

There are certain things so obvious, that being once understood, to recur to them in so many set words, would be to use “a vain repetition as the Heathens do.” When a fixed purpose is flashing in men’s eyes, and an electric sympathy pervading the whole mass, what boots it for every one to be jogging his neighbour’s memory, to remind him, “such are our grievances, and this are

we fighting for." If it is already universally known against whom their weapons are directed, it would not render it more sure to inscribe on every arrow, "**TO THE RIGHT EYE OF PHILIP.**"

But the principles of the *revolution were* well known, and acknowledged; it was not any blind plunging after some vague and indefinite object, which made the majority so majestic. All knew them by heart, and it is not saying too much, that *you* knew them, your Accidency. Shame, shame, to be so arrant a knave as ever to have pretended that you knew not what the real wishes of the people were. They were spoken to you by a thousand signs, in language plain and precise as Saxon English will admit of; in the thunders of a united people, through their representatives. But you made your ears deaf as adders. You vaunt yourself of being a Virginian. "Know ye not that I am a Virginian!" Oh! by the holy cause of truth, you are unworthy of that noble Commonwealth, or of any State in this Union.

But what a glorious campaign was it. It was the energy of despair, and suffering which roused such masses: it was the imperative commands of duty, which brought out the reserved guard to a man, the aged, the retired, and those weary of political strife. The spectacle presented was of

a sublime nature. It was the peaceful, orderly, lawful vindication of right and justice, without weapons, and without blood, through the ballot-boxes only, and it inspired new hope and courage in the institutions of our country. It proved that tyranny could not long triumph without a check, and that there was a recuperative power in our free government, which would always be asserted when the hour of need should come. The rout of the enemy was total. They perished, horse, foot, and dragoons. Unless the conquering party had a right to that name, I cannot tell you what became of the Democracy. Scarcely a State in the Union where their disorganization was not complete. The Chief Magistrate sat composedly in his palace when the thunders broke around him, and involved his fortunes in ruin. He found himself necessitated to take up with one term of office, although he approved most sincerely of two. He had not meditated so soon the delightfully cool retirement of his villa, but yielded to a somewhat forcible persuasion, and it is presumed, that he will never reach again the place which he once occupied. Politically buried, let us gather a few pleasant flowers to strew upon his grave :—May his bones rest in peace.

While the Democracy were so clean swept

away by the flood, the Whig party, we acknowledge it, were too obstreperously exulting. In their unbounded thankfulness, they glorified the old soldier, who had led them to so proud a triumph. It was a species of man-worship disagreeable to High Heaven. Your Accidenty partook of the grasp of friendship and congratulation, before that right hand, — that unworthy right hand, — had accomplished its treason. Your name was linked with that of the brave old soldier, and was extolled with his glory, and shared in his renown. It was celebrated in Io Pœans. The same wreaths encircled you both with their greenness, you caught upon your brow a part of the halo which surrounded his, and for you, too, they lifted up those loud exulting cries, which bursting from myriads of throbbing breasts, were more sublime than the winds of winter, or the voice of the tempest in its might. To have forgotten all this, and to the will of the Sublime People to have opposed your diminutive will, to have wrapped yourself in your accidental dignity, and to have constituted yourself, with the self-sufficiency of inferior abilities, the grand Interpreter of the Constitution, — ingratitude methinks more strong than traitor's arms, could have instigated this.

We do but anticipate events, and let the waters

of bitterness flow over from fountains, which are but too full. There never was a time when doom succeeded so quickly to a most refulgent triumph; when the roses scarcely withered in a single of their sweet leaves, had to be plucked so soon from the crown of rejoicing to strew upon the grave; when a nation's smiles were so chased away by a nation's tears, and a vivid, stirring life so hushed in the stillness and gloom of death;—but bitterer than death—when a people had to mourn not so much over departed worth, as living infamy; over a confidence betrayed too basely, and hopes stolen from them by a robber. When we think of the Fourth of March, that ever-memorable day in the American Capitol, with its pomps and rejoicings, the vast multitudes assembled, and the smiles which flashed from countenance to countenance, and played like lightning, with a swift sympathy, over the mass of upturned faces, the exultation which was in proportion to the severeness of the toil, and the completeness of the victory; the display, the music, the banners, the eloquence, the meeting of grey-headed sages, and young men, the sparkling beauty of women, and all which graced that scene, and then the nature of the scene itself, or rather of the spectacle;—an aged man, gray and scarred in the service of

the Republic, called forth at so late an hour, to be crowned with his reward, stepping forward with firm step and pronouncing that solemn oath of office; before him the assembled people, and behind him the noble capitol with the flag of his country flying in the breeze; when I think of all the pageantry of this glorious panorama, which one short month still left fresh, and vivid on the mind, and see it in that space of time, making way for another; in exchange for such a height of earthly glory, for these honours, this pomp, and gorgeous spectacle, the coffin, the hearse, the pall; the halls of our Legislature shrouded with mourning, and all the insignia of office muffled with black; men's faces gathering gloom, and every where over the land, but one prevailing sentiment of grief, we can but feel with BURKE, when startled at the intrusion of death, he exclaimed in his place, "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" The fourth of March, and the fourth of April! if those two days, considered with regard to their respective events, do not afford a moral, and a lesson of the bitter worthlessness of whatever we regard most deserving of trust, then it is difficult to say what will. When the echoes of the loud huzzas had scarcely died in air, we heard the hollow noise of the clods

upon the coffin. It was the bare hint of the possibility of a like event, conveyed in the following lines, which made the veteran Cromwell turn pale as ashes :

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds,
Upon Death's purple altar now,
See where the victor victim bleeds.

All heads must come

To the cold tomb!

Only the ashes of the just

Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

True, and beautiful sentiment! and its application is just and obvious to him of whom we now speak. His good name remaineth after him like a sweet perfume; his country is proud of every page of her history, on which the name of her HARRISON is inscribed. His remains repose in the bosom of that noble State which he loved, if he could be said to love any thing apart from his common country. On the banks of the Ohio, where it takes a bold sweep, and half embraces the soil which was his own, they have erected his monument, which, seen like that of the old Bianor in the distance, attracts the eyes of the far off traveller: Non magis erat præclara vita, quam mors plorata. Nemo cognovit eum qui non amarit. Inter difficillima nunquam non triumphavit, in mediis triumphis abiit. Sparserat jam ætas tempora nive, sed non prius evanuit quam

patria virenti lauro adornaverat. Vale, et respublica vivat.

Much as all men were bound to grieve at so sudden a calamity, yet a people, generous, unsuspecting, and not gifted with the spirit of prophecy, could not imagine that it would be any bar to the carrying out of the policy, or the principles, for which they had contended with such desperate exertion. They anticipated no baseness. They sent their representatives to Congress, fully instructed with their will, and then went about their business with cheerful hearts. It is true that the country had now no President, the powers and the duties of the office, by a clause in the Constitution, devolving on the subordinate, who became Acting President for the rest of the term. Conscious of the delicacy of his position, and of the peculiar means by which he arrived at it, he would doubtless carry out, with punctilious honour, the essential measures, for which his constituents had elevated to office his lamented predecessor, and which would have received his earliest acquiescence had he lived. This base man resolved that he would do no such thing. He meditated treachery by the cold remains of the departed, and hatched his treason over the grave. He sought to imitate the high-handedness of the elder Veto; but his conduct

stood in the light of a ridiculous parody. He aspired to a character of Roman firmness,—yet his was a compound which more nearly resembled Corinthian brass, or some baser metal. Weak, ambitious, and of a paltry vanity, he gave himself up from the first, to the most disreputable advisers, and consorted with them to thwart the wishes of that great People, who had unfortunately been instrumental in placing him at his present height. The lowest pot-house politicians became his bosom companions, and bore away the secrets of his Cabinet to disseminate them through their disreputable organs. In this way, prophecies were given forth, which turned out to be true history, and the threats of this weak man fulminated to the end of the land. In a word, he had already cast his eye on the succession, and lending an ear to the worst of sycophants and fawning parasites, and seizing the tempting bait which was thrown out to him, with a trembling eagerness of grasp, he meditated to effect his purpose by going over to the enemy, and he wanted to throw over the whole proceeding the false covering of consistency, a cloak of hypocrisy which honest indignation has torn from him, that there is not a rag left. Blasphemy that it was, to ascribe to a good spirit, the works of the Belial

of ambition, and, with criminal boldness, to take honour to himself for what ought to have blistered his forehead with shame.

It seems he would have *no bank*, and for his infallible convictions on this subject, he appealed to his buried and forgotten speeches, his oracular sayings in past days, his windy declamations, of which not an echo was remaining. He would have no bank, because he believed it unconstitutional, setting up his own judgment against the world, and dictating to millions of people, lately sovereigns in their might, now subject to the petty insolence and domination of one man. Why did he not say as much when he consented to be a candidate for office, and to reap the fruits of the struggle? Because he had not the manliness or honour to do so; because he knew his name would have been blotted from the ticket; because he chose to sneak in as a full-blooded Whig then, and keep his old musty speeches in reserve. Thus he could follow either policy, as interest seemed to dictate, and unfortunately falling into the hands of designing men, who prevailed on his weakness and excessive vanity, he decided to take the worse, and not the better reason. I say nothing here of the incompatibility of such conduct with his acceptance of office at the hands of the heterodox, with sentiments

acknowledged by him of a recent date, with words let slip and remembered by the hearers, or specially with conversations held by him on the subject of a bank, when he slept under the same quilt (probably owing to the crowded state of the inn,) with his loving cousin, JOHN M. BOTTS, Esq.! All these could not render it more clear that he understood and professedly accepted the terms on which he was elected, that he had put aside for the occasion his constitutional objections, and that he was bound in honour by a pledge which he tacitly acknowledged, as well as by his own words which he basely belied. It is enough that he contumeliously rejected every appeal which was most sacred; honour and modesty fled away to the vanishing point, while uprose the little demon of his ambition. It walked into the house which had been clean swept and garnished. It was a fouler spirit than any which had been expelled. What can be expected of men who have taken the first downward step. *Facilis descensus Averni!* But it was the crowning point of hypocrisy for a man who had already perjured himself before a whole people, to fall back with reverential dread upon his oath of office, and

clasping the Constitution to his breast, Coccus-like, to oppose himself to the assaults of — the enemy! Oh! Height of Patriotism! Oh! Depth of Infamy! Oh! Richness of Cant! Oh! Ripeness of Iniquity! Cheers for such courage all single-handed! A chorus, ye people, for the man of your choice;

For Tippecanoe, and TYLER TOO;
 For Tippecanoe, and Tyler too,
 And with them we'll beat little Van, Van,
 Van is a used-up man,
 And with them we'll beat little Van.

First came a little presentiment of threat, then in reply to the bold demand of the representatives of the people, transmitting to him a bill carefully considered and prepared, for his signature, a feeble, contemptible voice was returned as if it were ashamed of its own echoes, and dare not whisper above its breath, *Veto*. At the Hermitage, the old chief smiled at the diminutive thunder; scorn also played about his lips. He had been a soldier, and at that time he would have ordered a traitor to be shot.

I suppose the country remembers well enough the history of those three bank bills, and the conduct of the Executive; his shiftings and his turnings, how he said he would sign in such a shape, and then when the bill had been shorn of its fair proportions, it fitted his notions no better; how he

kept the committees employed day and night, on a fool's errand, and swore that every new attempt to please him, was an insult to his dignity, and at last, (what he meant to do from the first,) he would absolutely sign nothing. He threw his carcass in the way of the first, and chiefest measures intended for the relief of the people, as a frog or a snake will sometimes shut off the supplies from an aqueduct. To refer to the subject at all, is to recall to every honourable breast, the first poignancy of indignation and disgust. Yet how is it possible to forget, though it may be to forgive, his unparalleled treachery; to banish from the mind that deplorable exhibition of febrile weakness, his turnings and his shufflings, how he said one thing in presence of abundant witnesses, and then wanted to face them down that he said no such thing, how he writhed and prevaricated in his subterfuges of argument, and at last went into a lively passion, out of which he could only be drawn by the blandishments of his new friends, and the sibilant murmurs of their adulation. He was cheek by jole with two-penny reporters, and drove his Cabinet from him in disgust. But he gained his present reward. Throwing himself into the arms of the enemy, they received him gladly, praised him for his firmness and indomitable courage, blew a trumpet

in his honour, where occasion offered, toasted him in their assemblies, and threw out vague hints that patriotism like his, was at some future day sure of meeting its reward. From that moment they led him by cunning artifice, cajoling him with honeyed words, and by the press, and sending deputies to block up the avenues of his palace, and to persuade him that he was the most distinguished man whom the world ever produced. He listened, he believed; and as his true friends deserted him, and left him alone, he filled up their places with the clamorous applicants for office, and the needy bands who sought to do him reverence; for he was too lost to know the value of a true friend, and had not yet learned that the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. At last he banished all respect and all dignity, gathering around him such a deplorable squad, as to excite the contempt of the representatives of every nation. Many of his new friends had already deserted him, and as the hireling presses who had first praised him, assumed a different tone, he was fast hurrying down to the uttermost depths of contempt when the genius of JOHN JONES, for a moment upheld him! He snatched a feather from an angel's wing, and wrote in characters of light. His sentiments were edged with brilliance, his

figures of the tallest sort. He swelled with all the pomp of rhetoric, and effervesced with a wrath which occasioned his diction to froth. He was of the πολυφλοίσβοιο kind. What wonder, since his themes were lofty as your orators of the Fourth ; liberty, patriotism, and the glorious services, and undaunted courage of his master ; that he should be celebrated to the latest posterity, and children's children should rise up to call him blessed ; Laocoon-like he had strangled the monster which was starting up with renewed energy, and would sip the life-blood of our country. Whether JOHN JONES burst out into eager philippics, and broke the vials of his wrath over the heads of those who loved him not, or modulating his temper to the tone of flutes, and soft recorders, he poured into the listening ear a torrent of soft, vernal and extremely balmy flattery ; or galled by severe treatment, threw himself into an attitude of fence, and took up the weapons of attack ; or in his calmer mood defined the Constitution, and laid hold of the subtleties of law ; whether in fact he uplifted his head in clouds, or stalked majestically on the level ground of ordinary prose, there was no human being who could mistake the source of such a scholarly display, and nobody but could choose exclaiming, *Hic ille* ; this is JOHN JONES ! Yet a mystery has shrouded him ; few have seen

him with the naked eye ; few men can point you to his whereabouts ; somewhere or other he indites his learned dissertations, his *επεα πτερόεντα*—winged words—but for the rest, he is *in nubi-bus*. Gaze painfully, and you may get a view of his shadowy form, vague, indistinct, and unsatisfactory.

“Do you not see him?”

“I confess my eye-sight is not quite so good.”

“Oh, spare it then, by every prudential motive.”

“But where is he?”

“Oh, he in the *Novum Organum*, not of Bacon, but of the new philosophy, the new administration. Mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. There will be found such heaped up treasure, such wealth of thought, such triumphings of reason, such musical tunings of the imagination, such liquid trumpetings—ha! ha! ha!—there is something burlesque in it after all! Adieu! John Jones, shadowy personage! shadow of a shade!”

Paulo majora canamus. Low as the Executive was sunken then, it is nothing to that abysm of contempt in which he flounders at this very moment. He has discovered in the lowest depth some lower deep. If we look back upon his career (and where’s the honest man that could do it without a shudder of disgust?) there was a time

when charity, if of a very christian kind, would have reluctantly thrown a mantle over his sins ; and though none were found so large that it would cover all, she would have turned away her face from their remaining nakedness. Yes, once, as we have already said, he was fain to throw over his own actions the white, gauzy veil of consistency and patriotic motives, and although in this he only added falsehood to crime, and heaped up the fagots of resentment ; yet he had still a little sense of decency, and struggled a little longer to keep up the appearance of things. At last, he openly acknowledged himself apostate, and claimed of the Devil his reward. But, as frequently happens to men of his stamp, he found that he had struck an unprofitable bargain, and having given up every thing, was likely to reap nothing but a harvest of contempt in return.

Unhappy cavalier ! — not roundhead ! — unhappy Virginia cavalier ! when, like a better man, you let your horse go, and walked over into the roughest ranks of the Democracy, your ambitious heart throbbed with that apparent warmth of welcome. But even then, the Democracy scorned you, and though policy induced them to treat with you a while, until they had gained from you what they wished, they had too much honest feeling to regard you in any other light than a noto-

rious traitor ; and now they openly say as much. They mince matters no longer, they suffer you no longer to cherish a false and delusive hope, they speak to you authoritatively through their organs, "we will have no dealings with you—we will not receive you into our ranks—least of all can we confer on you high honors—we have uncontaminated men of our own—do not look to us for suffrage:" and when you reply in under tone, and bated breath, striking the very bass note of humility, "Gentlemen, through my life long, I have set Jefferson before me for a pattern, (Apostle of Liberty!) I have humbly endeavored to pursue all his maxims, to follow in his footsteps, for the sake of the great Democracy, Oh, for God's sake, give me credit for the sacrifice I have made;" they do but laugh in their sleeves, and while they vouchsafe to you (as a guest!) the poor, cold courtesy of a little constrained applause, they have inwardly passed upon you a unanimous verdict of contempt. Tammany Hall itself is defiled with your presence; its walls have never admitted so treasonable a shape. What will become of you, so actively repelled on all sides, when at this very time, there is scarcely a man who deserves the name, who is willing to grasp your hand, or so much as touch the extremity of your fingers; when you have

brought the office which you fill, as notable, as honorable as any upon earth, into contempt, and men strive in vain to separate the two, or suffer the dignity, the power, and the glory of our country to be vested in such a person as yourself. Your Cabinet is always on the verge of dissolution, always changing and disturbed in its elements, because it is held together by no bond of affection and respect for you; and now it has lost forever its greatest jewel, whose glory was only dimmed by remaining so long in the impure atmosphere of your court. What has it availed you to have put in play all the weapons of your treachery poisoned by your revenge? To have offered profuse gifts and largess to men who the very next moment have turned all against you; after your particular professions on this point, to have been guilty of a venality so outrageous as to be the topic of all parties, and to have prostituted the patronage of the government more flagitiously than has ever yet been known. Take your own words as they are recorded in your address to the people of the United States after your accession to office, and put them together with those after professions of consistency. It is enough to make one's sides burst

with the lateral pressure of a melancholy mirth. Consistency! hold that jewel up to the light! turn it round that all may see it! Is it of a pure water? Is it a diamond? refulgent, dazzling, as when first taken out of the earth? Or is it only a wretched vulgarity, of a feeble lustre, a dull light, which cannot deceive, and fit only to place on the bosom of one who is no judge of false gems, and who boasts of his —— consistency! You said that you would have no partisanship among office-holders, and that you would remove no incumbent who had faithfully discharged his duty; —and now, *mehercle*, you turn out of office every man of them who does not take an active part, and go forth among the highways and hedges, to proclaim himself the partisan of your government, and to bring in the raw recruits. Nay, you have sent quiet men packing, not because they have not obeyed your orders, remaining demurely silent, afraid to speak above their breaths, but because they have been *suspected* of being *in their hearts*, secretly adverse to your government! What innumerable post-masters have you not dismissed, because you were not satisfied with their submission! What hordes of custom-house officers have you not discharged for failing to busy themselves in your cause, or to meddle with politics, or to be taxed to the amount of half their income for your

support! You have turned them out, good men and true, they might be, it mattered not; you have turned them out, and still entertaining a forlorn, feeble hope that the Democracy would relent, and adopt you into their ranks, you have put Loco Focos in. Honour to your patriotism! Let the matches blaze! Strike up the lights! Regard well their faces, that they be what they profess to be, and be sure that there is not a man among them, who with true, honest purpose, laboured day and night, with heart and hand to uplift your brazen front to its present high post of honour. Be careful that you do not leave a man in office, who bears the name of Whig, — not the aged man, — not the veteran soldier, — who had fought battles for his country, and shed his blood with profuseness before your race of infamy began: and if you are so much in want of partisans that they cannot be obtained in any other way, seek them among the *candy makers!* and under your own hand and seal send out from the palace, your official notice of the virtue of *Pease's Horehound Candy*. No doubt it is the sovereignest thing on earth for colds, and a certain remedy for consumption. The wasted man will eat a stick of it, and walk off into the frightened ranks of the healthy. But do not, my invalid friend, be beguiled into imbibing too much of its sweet bitterness. Ipecacu-

ana may be taken *ad nauseam* ; yet it is a gentle physic for babes. All this however is not so bad as that exorbitant self-commendation, the bold, and unlooked-for presence of your Accidenty, the going about with the bustle of a raree show, to be received in some places with sneers, and undisguised disgust, in others with a lamentable silence. You could not well mistake the expression which hovered over so many faces, the reception icy, yet respectful, which told of two sentiments struggling in the bosom, regard for the office, but loathing for the man. Yet when you approached this great city, a new and livelier hope might have inspired you, when you beheld all places as far as the eye could reach, the shipping, the docks, the wharves, the house-tops, crowded with human beings, all eagerly awaiting your approach. But what, think you, drew this great concourse together ? What motive impelled them ? What went they out for to see ? Did the same feelings make their bosoms throb with joy as when the city once received the Father of his Country, the immortal WASHINGTON, and exultation burst all bounds, and scattered incense in his path ? Or when in later days she loved to honour with her most cordial welcome, the NATION'S GUEST ? No : there were crowds now, but they would have been there with the same eagerness at the disembarcation of a caravan.

They came indeed to a rare sight, such as the city had not seen in its full size and deformity since ARNOLD came sneaking over the lines to Sir HENRY CLINTON, at New-York,—they came to look upon a T——r.

He stood upon the castle-bridge, trembling with excitement, and near him Ahaseurus stood, thrusting his fingers through his hair, like Julius Cæsar. But Julius Cæsar had not fair hair, but black or auburn, and though he was a good orator, yet he wrote not poems; nay, on further reflection, he did, and recited them on the sea shore to the pirates who had captured him at the island of Pharmacusa. He was in some senses of the word, a *Repealer* also; therefore let us pause here, lest we be in danger of running a good parallel between Ahasuerus and Julius Cæsar, a task which we would delight to commit to some modern Plutarch. But what went the people out for to see? They went to see a man so admirably encased, that after betraying whatever they had committed to his charge, he was not ashamed to knock at their very doors for hospitality. To throw himself into the midst of civic pomps and processions, when he deserved no other price for his iniquity, than men award to thieves. And who went out to see or to ask the honour of a presentation to his accidental dignity? Was it the hungry candidate for

office, the ever-cringing parasite of power? Was it the fathers of the city, or the *Indignation Ladies*? Or the Democracy who make so loud professions of economy, and run up a tavern bill of a thousand dollars in a single day for entertaining his Excellency? Oh! instead of courting the publicity of crowds and grand processions, a juster sense of his degradation might have instructed him to bury his head in silence, and seek the shadows of the darkest retirement; and there like Amiens to the banished Duke to discourse philosophy to his co-mates in exile :

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The season's difference; as the icy fang,
And churlish chiding of the winter wind,
Which when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,—
This is no flattery: these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.
Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Such was not the language of his weak ambition; yet since he openly challenged the opinion of the world, he will receive it,—for the present in such contempt as language has no

power to convey, — for the future in such fame as strongly resembles infamy, in such celebrity as the nation accords to ingrates, and history to traitors.

For that great party who threw away the fruits of their struggle, it were pusillanimous to despair. They await the coming of a brighter day, and hail already the breaking of the dawn. A greater vigilance shall be the price of safety. Yet the same century cannot nourish such another. That is indeed a reflection which carries a balm with it. They cannot be foiled in the same manner again, for the most painful scrutiny could not detect in all the ranks of men such another paragon of meanness. Let him make haste to fill up the measure of his infamy, for soon the absolute withdrawal of all suffrage shall compel him to retire—to his own State?—it is doubtful whether she will receive him into her bosom, or any longer acknowledge him as his son—or if he flies from his whole country, what would it avail?

—— Patriæ quis exul
Se quoque fugit?

For the present, he is surrounded by the splendours for which he has made so grievous a cast, and is cheated with the vagueness of hope; but when time shall have taken away the one, and scattered the delusion of the other,

he may then experience as he turns his eye backward, what with the good is merely *reflection*, with the bad, *remorse*. By the great, undaunted Whig Party, battles are to be fought over, discomfiture retrieved. But it will inspire courage to have a chief who is the very impersonation of the principles contended for, and who has stood up so often, the manly and consistent champion of them all. Gratitude, admiration, and a sense of justice will not suffer him to be again postponed to policy; for no policy can be good which does not confer on services like his an enduring reward. He will not be permitted to retire again modestly from the field; the laurels are his own; the great People will bind them upon his *brow*; they will call on none other than the proud, untarnished, glorious name of HENRY CLAY. In him they behold a character above envy, a firmness unshaken; a consistency which vaunteth not itself, but stands as fixed and unaltered now as if it had never been assaulted by the frenzy of the people.

Whether viewed in the light of the present or the past, or on whatever theatre of action, friends or political foes can but regard him with admiration. But he is noble in his own place in the Senate; his form upright, his eye kind-

ling, his voice more musical than the winds of the west, his words all persuasion, his eloquence clear, and delightful as the water which gushes out of the rock. To listen to him is to forget all things, and to be carried with him to the loftiest height, and to the purest atmosphere of his eloquence. Regard him alone, and he needs not the advantage of any contrast; the beauty of his character would rather lead one to abstraction and analysis. But throw him into a violent juxtaposition with the faithless or untrue, and the two firmaments would scarcely illustrate the disparity of the men. Compare them and where shall we seek for any figure of illustration. Standing side by side in the scathed and blasted field of politics, they are like the low-browed hut, and the Corinthian column in the sands of the desert. The one inground with filth and filled with squalidness, the other a pure shaft, divinely wrought, untouched in all its matchless symmetry; uninjured in a single tender leaf of its acanthus entwined around its gorgeous capital. The winds and storms have beat against it, yet it stands unmoved in all its towering beauty, and it shall one day be a pillar of strength in a temple, whose proportions shall be matchless, and whose duration shall be lasting as its own.

✓
JOHN, THE TRAITOR;

OR,

THE FORCE OF ACCIDENT.

A PLAIN STORY.

BY ONE WHO HAS WHISTLED AT THE PLOUGH.

Hunc lubido maxima invaserat reipublicæ capiundæ; neque, id quibus modis adsequeretur, dum sibi regnum pararet, quidquam pensi habebat. Agitabatur magis, magisque indies animus ferox conscientia scelerum quæ utraque his artibus auxerat, quas supra memoravi.

Sallust Bel. Cat.

NEW YORK:

1843.
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